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Chapter 11

STREET-BASED SEX WORK IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Katie Hail-Jares and Sharon S. Oselin

The Internet has radically changed how businesses reach and interact with their customers. Sex workers were among the first proprietors to set up business on the world wide web, recognizing its value in reaching new markets. For instance, alt.sex.services, a basic online classified forum, was active in the 1980s and the first registered prostitution website went live in December 1996.¹ Today, digital sex work, or the “Internet-mediated exchange of sexual commodities and/or services,” is ubiquitous, spanning many types of sites and media.²

In the early 2000s, as digital sex work was expanding, many scholars began considering how the Internet might facilitate a “great migration” within sex work, offering street-based sex workers, who sell services in open-air public marketplaces, an opportunity to begin working inside.³ Similar predictions had been made about earlier technologies; Lee-Gonyea and colleagues noted that “the telephone, and then the pager, permitted the streetwalker to take their business indoors. These two technological advances turned the streetwalker into the call girl.”⁴ Economists offered much the same predictions with the expansion of third-party hosting sites, such as Craigslist and Backpage, which allowed sex workers to post low-cost classified ads offering their services, first explicitly and then later obliquely. Over a decade ago, Cunningham and Kendell presented a “sunny” perspective on how client migration to online marketplaces would displace, and then eventually end, street-based sex work altogether:

the Internet has exponentially increased the ability of sex workers to (a) reach large numbers of potential clients with informative advertising, (b) build reputations for high-quality services, and (c) employ screening methods to

reduce the risk of discovery [for arrest] and avoid undesirable clients. . . . In the street-based market, some customers who previously purchased prostitution services there may have switched to purchasing services online after Internet solicitation began flourishing. Given that Internet technology is rarely employed by streetwalkers, the cost structure of street work is unlikely to have changed much, and so the reduction in demand should lead to lower prices in the street-sector. . . . In addition, some streetwalking prostitutes may be able to move into indoor work in response to the higher relative wages available there, creating an additional supply-driven displacement effect.⁵

At the core of their predictions, these authors presuppose that street workers will exit if they are able or forced out. If they are not able to, they will eventually lose their clients as those customers also migrate online.

This central tenant is perhaps understandable as considerable research has established that street-based sex workers bear the brunt of violence and victimization, arrest and incarceration, and physical or verbal attacks from neighbors or vigilantes.⁶ In both media accounts and research, street-based sex work is frequently depicted as a fleeting interaction, with limited emotional connection between worker and client, making providers essentially interchangeable.⁷ Moreover, street work is often linked to poverty, substance use, and a general lack of social mobility or opportunity as a result of racism, homophobia, and transphobia.⁸ Thus, while street-based workers are profoundly marginalized, there is also the implication that many lack the ability to make this transition online since “Internet technology is so rarely employed by streetwalkers,” as Cunningham and Kendell claim.

But as digital sex work has spread, researchers have shifted their attention away from the “great migration,” and instead focused on the new types of sex work that emerged, such as webcamming, sex surfing,⁹ or online-indoor providers.¹⁰ The focus is on these emerging

marketplaces rather than the expansion of existing sectors. Jones, one of the earliest critics of how researchers approached digital sex work, was among the first to suggest that the “great migration” was a misnomer, and not reflective of market expansion. She suggested that this “great migration” from the street to online had not happened, and instead, that all variety of sex workers, including streetworkers, used online sites as ways to expand or diversify their participation in sexual marketplaces.¹¹

The “multiple ways” street-based sex workers use marketplaces has been reinforced in empirical research as well. Raphael and Shapiro found that 60% of the 222 sex workers interviewed reported they had worked in multiple venues.¹² Similarly, a study of exiting sex workers reported that a third of the sample had worked both indoors and outside.¹³ Finally, the Canadian Community Health Assessment of Men who Purchase and Sell Sex, a comparison study of male, trans, and gender non-conforming workers’ experiences, found that many workers indicated a high degree of venue mobility, with street-based and online sex work as the two top marketplaces listed.¹⁴ Rather than being **street-based** these studies suggest outdoor workers use strolls as one of many marketplaces to meet clients.¹⁵

How have street-based sex workers utilized the Internet? Has it been “rarely employed” by them or used as an “additional space” for business expansion? We consider several questions to explore the assumed divide between indoor and outdoor sex work. First, how frequently do street-based workers employ technology for recruitment and work purposes? Second, what factors and reasons influence whether street-based workers use digital platforms? Our findings suggest that street workers in Washington, DC indeed use digital platforms; these online platforms are a significant source of client recruitment; and that other structural conditions (**rather** than work context and sector) are the primary factors that influence sex workers’ experiences with violence and health inequity.

METHODS

Recruitment Strategies & Locations

In the winter of 2014 and spring of 2016, the authors conducted semi-structured interviews with 59 street workers as part of an ongoing project exploring gentrification and street-based sex work in Washington, DC. Street workers operate in outdoor marketplaces which are frequently referred to as strolls. Such marketplaces are also highly visible with low barriers to entry. In Washington, three types of street markets operate: drug-associated, identity-associated, and high-track. Workers in this study were recruited from four strolls: City Vista, State Border Road, Downtown, and Highway.¹⁶ Service records suggest that the majority of workers in Washington operate along identity-associated areas, followed by drug-associated, and then high-track.¹⁷ Our recruitment efforts focused on the city's identity-associated and high-track strolls. This decision was in part because drug-associated strolls have been overrepresented in research on street-level sex work; our recruitment was in part to create a fuller picture of how street markets operate when they were not explicitly motivated by addiction.¹⁸

Identity-associated strolls are organized around a shared identity among workers, e.g., gender identity or sexuality. Examples include the infamous Boystowns of both Chicago and Vancouver, Canada. Washington is home to two well-known identity-associated strolls, City Visa and State Border Avenue, worked almost exclusively by trans women. Washington, DC also supports two high-track strolls. These two strolls have been described at length elsewhere.¹⁹ Recreational drug use (specifically alcohol, marijuana, and ecstasy) contributes to a “block party” environment, but does not drive or motivate the sex work (as it would on a drug-associated stroll). Drugs are largely used for enjoyment and not dependence. However, as we will discuss, workers in identity-associated strolls are still primarily motivated by lack

of employment opportunities rather than the procurement of drugs. Moreover, there is almost no pimping or managing along the identity-associated strolls.

Criminologist John Lowman first described street strolls as a tiered system of price and service.²⁰ Workers along “*high-track*” strolls, such as Downtown and Highway in Washington, DC, command relatively high prices compared to other types of street-based work, and are more likely to have managers or pimps (sometimes referred to as “folks”). Drug use is relatively rare and discouraged along high-track strolls, and workers who use drugs are often looked down upon by non-users. Lowman suggests that workers along high-track strolls are examples of “opportunistic or bourgeois prostitution,” as opposed to survival sex, where “a person chooses to prostitute . . . [over] low-paid forms of ‘shit work’ they might otherwise have to perform.”²¹ High-track strolls exist and are most successful in cities with high volumes of commuter traffic and tourists. In Washington the high track strolls operate in the early morning hours; they are busiest between 4 and 8am, allowing workers to establish regulars among both local businessmen who are “heading into the office a bit early,” as well as the changeover from night shift.

This stroll-based recruitment scheme resulted from nearly six years of ethnographic work conducted by the first author, who volunteered with HIPS, a local harm-reduction program that was founded to support sex workers in the city. Originally a mobile service, HIPS expanded to include a drop-in health clinic for sex workers and people who use drugs. Still, its mobile unit – a minivan at that time – was central to its outreach work along these strolls. The authors were granted permission to use the van as a mobile interview room on nights that outreach was not normally provided (Sunday-Wednesday).²² Eligible sex workers acknowledged exchanging sex for money, housing, or other goods, and were over 18. Recruitment for this study, then, followed previous methods used by other researchers to reach street-based sex workers.²³

When contacted, participants were actively working along the stroll (or had finished and were hanging out with friends) and met individually with the authors in the van. The authors stressed that participation was voluntary and did not affect their future ability to use HIPS services. In addition, three interviews were conducted in the HIPS office; these occurred spontaneously when workers from the stroll recommended that their friends stop by to complete the interviews and the first author happened to be there. Otherwise, snowball sampling was generally not used.

Interviews included questions about use of technology. Workers were asked if they used online services to find clients; if so, the percentage of their clients who were accessed online; which option (street vs. online) presented a safer work environment; and the characteristics they liked about each venue. Initially, we hoped these questions would illustrate the relationship between neighborhood gentrification and technology use (e.g. were sex workers using technology more often as neighborhoods gentrified?). However, these conversations soon evolved into a more exploratory look at how workers used websites and apps concurrently or complimentary to streetwalking. In addition to questions about technology and client recruitment, workers were also asked a series of questions related to age, gender, race, tenure in sex work, housing (2016-wave only), and educational attainment. Each sex worker received \$25 in compensation for their interview. To ensure confidentiality, only verbal consent was obtained, and pseudonyms are used here to identify respondents. All interviews were digitally recorded and typically lasted about 1 hour.

Data Analysis

The interviews were saved and filed according to a numeric code, and upon transcription the recordings were promptly deleted. The authors used *DeDoose* software to code interviews and both independently coded the same two randomly selected interviews,

subsequently discussed the codes, and ultimately decided which ones to collapse, modify or expunge for consistency. Using this coding scheme, the authors split the remaining interviews and assigned codes and subcodes that pertained to worker's use of technology. The authors exchanged these coded interviews for the other's review and reconciled any coding discrepancies in order to finalize the codes across interviews for consistency.²⁴ While this study is primarily qualitative, we wanted to provide some frequencies for orienting the reader to our sample and major findings. Quantitative data, in the form of survey type questions, was uploaded into Stata 14 and cleaned. Frequency analysis, including comparison tests across the two samples, were conducted.

FINDINGS

Respondents' Profiles

Twenty-three sex workers were interviewed in 2014 and an additional 36 in 2016.²⁵ A typical interviewee was a Black transgender woman, who was 27.5 years old and had been doing sex work for almost 8 years (Table 11.1). Both trans and Black/African-American people are overrepresented in our sample and in the city's population of street sex workers generally. The largest proportion of our sample was between the ages of 25-34, with 37.5% indicating they had started selling sex before they turned eighteen. Three-quarters of our interviewees had completed at least high school, and a fifth had some college-level study (Table 11.1). By comparison, over 90% of city residents indicated they had at least a Bachelor's degree, suggesting street-based workers have much lower educational attainment relative to other workers in the city.²⁶

<< TABLE 11.1 HERE >>

Two-thirds of the sample indicated that sex work was their only source of income (Table 11.1). And many noted the lack of other employment opportunities when discussing their choice to rely upon sex work. For example, Simone engaged in sex work as a way to earn money while still looking for a licit job: “I have to pay rent, I have to pay a cell phone bill. It’s kinda hard right now to find a job. To feed myself, to travel, to take interviews, to pay for school, to go to the library to fill out applications.”

Simone’s response suggests she was also navigating housing instability, an experience common among our interviewees. During the second interview wave, we asked explicitly about housing status, and a quarter indicated they were homeless – sleeping outside without shelter, staying in a shelter, or couch-surfing – and another third indicated they were living with family (Table 11.1). MyKayla expanded upon Simone’s comments about the overall economy and confirmed that sex work was tied to her survival: “I’m homeless and [this] keeps a roof over my head. Another reason is to feed myself and clothe [myself]. And I just do it. The money is just there.”

Low educational attainment and loss of housing were two major reasons workers engaged in street work. But a third reason also emerged: transphobia, or facing discrimination as a result of being transgender. Both Simone and MyKayla are trans women. Two other trans women, also in their early 30s, tied their involvement in sex work directly to the discrimination they faced when trying to find work or housing:

It’s quick, fast money, less hassle. It is kind of a hassle but you can come to work anytime, no specific time, and no interview hassles and things of that nature. ... You know hassles that transgenders have when you’re applying for work. ... I’ve had incidents where I was given a job and when it got to the final manager it’s what we got to have a second interview because of my identity and this and that, or there’s questions about my birth name and I have to get into details. It’s just a whole bunch of crap that I refuse to go thru. (Allyson)

It's easy money and it's kinda hard for transgendered women to get jobs . . . because a lot of people are afraid to hire some girls [who] might have [surgical] work done that's not, like, suitable to society. Some girls had work done that didn't turn out so good because we get work done under the table because it's affordable. (Tamyra)

Allyson and Tamyra noted that transphobia and discrimination led them to continue engaging in sex work. In Allyson's case, previous experiences with discrimination turned her off to exploring other job opportunities. While sex work was not a preferred option, it was less invasive than going through traditional interviews and ultimately being rejected. Similarly, Tamyra's comment pointed out that managers were "afraid to hire girls" on the basis of their ability to "pass," or be read as cisgender. Accordingly, not being able to pass could be because they have not transitioned (e.g. started taking hormones and/or sought feminization surgeries) or because of "under the table surgeries." Concern over the cost of such gender-affirmative surgery was another common reason for engagement in sex work, with other workers stating that they worked multiple jobs to help offset such expenses.

Street Workers and Digital Platforms

While street strolls were one marketplace, we learned that many of the sex workers in our sample had worked multiple marketplaces simultaneously: online or through apps, such as Backpage, Craigslist, Eros, and various "sugar daddy" discussion groups (including Reddit subthreads). In addition to street work, half currently solicited online and nearly another quarter had solicited online in the past (Table 11.2). While some workers arranged online dates to pick them up directly from the strolls, workers often used "online" and "inside" interchangeably when describing such work, suggesting that even if they arranged car dates online, the majority of their online work happened indoors, either as in-calls (the workers'

house) or out-calls (client's house or a hotel). Just a quarter had never used online platforms to obtain customers.

More surprisingly, clients who were solicited online made up a sizable proportion of street workers' client base. The proportion of clients arranged through online solicitation ranged from 3% to 100%, with an average of 60% among those who advertised online.²⁷ Among those who were currently using the Internet to solicit clients, 41.4% recruited over three-quarters of their clients through online platforms (Table 11.2). Overall, workers provided four reasons for online solicitation: expanding market share, better money, comfort, and safety.

<< TABLE 11.2 HERE >>

Expanding Market Share

For the majority of workers, online work was part of market diversification. As Alix explained "I'm usually on the Internet. My dates come through my phone all the time." Kayle added, "I like to do both [online and outside] . . . to multitask." Seasonality was a major factor in deciding how much work to pull from the streets. When asked what proportion of clients came from online, Allyson responded that her answer depended on the season: "I make more money online in the wintertime. Summertime is better for the street because people come out more. [I arrange] 95% of dates online during the winter, but only 30% during the summer." Shifting between inside and outside recruitment arenas seasonally also allowed providers to (re)capture that "new girl" advantage in each market. Lesley clarified: "I'm not currently [online] at the moment, but it's about to be summertime, so I know they're missing Jordan [her online persona]. They'll come back when I pop back up." Lesley cultivated distinct personas for each space, which allowed her to not only experiment with different services but also build a client base that missed her absence. By expanding into

online platforms, workers built up markets that could stay “open” year-round, lessened the impact of bad weather on their business, and allowed them to recapture some of that newness by disappearing and then reappearing in certain spaces.

However, this directionality – moving from the streets to online – was not always the case. We found more examples of the opposite movement: indoor workers transitioning outdoors. For example, Oshae, a trans woman who had performed sex work for five years, moved from online to outside after meeting some clients that preferred street-based strolls:

Before coming outside, I was doing [sex work] from my house through Backpage. . . . I had met this African dude and he used to pay me like \$300 for 5 minutes, so I was like oh, okay, maybe I can go outside and make some more money, meet more people [like him], you know what I’m saying? So I started coming outside and then I started using the phones when I met Maya [another sex worker]. She was like, “You know you can arrange dates through phones, chatlines, and Craigslist, and stuff like that?” So I was like, “Okay, I can do that, too.” I started doing all three.

Oshae enlarged her market share to street-based strolls, where eventually, her new colleagues suggested that rather than give up her online share, she expand them. Her story suggests that street-based colleagues were already using a multitude of marketplaces and had a savvy grasp of how these online spaces could be used to complement street-based work.

The role of peers or colleagues in expanding such market share was common. Brianna, a trans woman who drew about a fifth of her clients from online spaces, initially started working online to do “doubles” with a friend but then started seeing its potential as a recruitment tool to expand her clientele: “I kind of work online. A girlfriend of mine, she works online and we’ll double date or she don’t want a date and we’ll take turns. But it’s not my [online] page. It’s her page. . . . I really like that work. I was thinkin’ about gettin’ me a

page done and doin' it that way.” At present, working doubles presented a good opportunity for Brianna to explore online with minimal investment or commitment. The role of peers in introduction went both ways – personal networks could encourage or discourage entrée into this forum. Ashlee stated why she did not work online: “None of my friends I hang with work online. We went to this hotel party and his friends that knew him . . . came from up here, and they work online.” Ashlee pointed out that working online is so far removed from her social group that only this distant friend-of-a-friend is her connection to online markets. As such, she had not explored online marketplaces and concluded that she had no interest in them .

Finally, while most of the trans women (and cis men) we spoke to described it as a personal decision to expand their market share in this way, at least one cis woman, Lesley, mentioned that she started working outside at the behest of her “folks,” i.e., her manager:

I’m from online. Most of my regulars come from online. Even if I’m not online, my online clientele still comes and sees me. . . . If this wasn’t where [my manager] was, I definitely wouldn’t [be working outside]. Now, I’m trying to elevate him. Get him on[line] and how I’m used to doing things.

Clients, colleagues, and managers all contributed to a worker’s decision to move into a new market – whether that be online or outside. The descriptions of pathways between the two markets also suggests more fluidity rather than a fixed career trajectory. Rather than being one type of worker, siloed in either inside or outside places, most moved between these options throughout their career or concurrently operated in both. This finding departs from the robust sex work literature that analyzes type of sex work according to sector, often treating them as fundamentally distinct and fixed career paths.

Money

The majority of interviewees noted that online work was more lucrative than street work. This additional income was procured through two different avenues. First, workers explained that the rates are higher online and they were able to charge for time rather than services. Raven, a trans woman who formerly recruited all of her clients online, summed up this difference in pricing models: “More money. Outside, they pay you \$50-\$60. In the house, you charge them every hour.” Krysta, a cis woman who had only been working for six months, agreed, “I love working online because I don’t have to be outside. It’s a lot more money. A lot. Like I’ll book my calls for like \$300 an hour and if you get 2 or 3 of those a day then you’re good even if you just get two which is \$600 which is better than coming out here.” Thus, even with cancellations and no shows – a major point of contention among providers who worked online – the math strongly favored online work. Online work also enabled providers to start charging early in the process. Jade noted that her website required clients to enter payment details before a client could contact her, meaning that all of the interaction was paid for in advance: “Anyone who pulls up my website, once you click on it, you’re paying me \$7.99 a minute.” Charging by the time, rather than sex act, allowed workers to set higher rates than they could outside.

Second, interviewees believed working online granted them more control over price negotiation. Providers publicized their rates and, since clients could see the price before engaging with them, it filtered out some of those unable to pay and decreased overall negotiations. By comparison, during street interactions, much of the discussion around money happened informally, and customers were often drivers of the rates. Pamela, a trans woman who was taking a break from working online, summarized: “I definitely say online you can advertise yourself a little bit better. You can request what you want. Out here [on the street], it’s pretty much, ‘Hey I pulled up onto the curb. This is what I have. Are you going to take it?’” Other workers agreed with Pamela, confirming that the social norms for online were

different and the “this is what I have” method of negotiation was frowned upon. Because hourly rates were stated upfront, clients were expected to accept these terms and follow through with payment.

Price setting was not the only matter that workers could address in their online ads. Online also presented options to expand market share and earnings by appealing to new or different types of clients. Many workers embraced this opportunity to experiment with different forms of sex work. For example, Courtney, a trans woman who had been doing sex work for 17 years, explained, “I love working online . . . [because] it’s different things that you can do online. Online you’ve got webcam. Online you can just do a lot more than coming in the streets.” Courtney used online to engage in camming and other no-contact types of sex work that were less physically demanding than streetwalking and penetrative sex. Similarly, Robert, a cis man who recruited 75% of his clients from online, favored online customer recruitment because ads allowed him to specify his sexual preferences which sometimes created problems during street-based dates:

It’s different because they are actually looking for it there online. If they hit me up, I feel comfortable because I already know what they want because it’s all in my ad. [On the street] I get in the car and I have to explain to them that I’m a top. They’re like “no.”

Lesley similarly used online sources to expand into fetish work:

The process [of setting up a date online] is definitely more different. The pay is not as much outside. You date by service outside. Online, you date by time. . . . Out here, it’s actually really sex work. Online, most of my clients, I don’t even perform any sexual acts. It’s more time. I’m [a] fetish queen. . . . Most fetishes, there are no sexual acts. I actually have less sex online.

For all three respondents, online work enabled them to expand their service offerings into areas that may not be associated with street work and further augment their client bases. As a result, their earnings increased as well.

Comfort

Another benefit of working online was that dates typically occurred indoors, Workers appreciated how such arrangements added value and comfort to their lives. Chyna, a trans woman who recruited 95% of her dates online, offered that the “comfortability” was her favorite part of working online:

You can be comfortable. [Working online] is more stress relieving, like you don't have to worry about somebody looking in your car or other stuff. You can take your clothes off and get to feel comfortable and you can charge what you want. I charge for my time, not the service. So if you wanna stay longer, that's just [another] \$300.

In contrast, many described street work as profoundly *uncomfortable*. A number of participants noted that the long hours of walking, sex in cars or outdoors, the dirtiness, the weather, and the ubiquitous presence of police all contributed to unpleasant working conditions. Several noted that their discomfort with outside work had less to do with these environmental factors and more to do with the visibility. Working outside “is embarrassing. [You] just looking dumb,” explained Michele. Mercedes agreed, and served as a stark reminder of the lack of options she and other trans women routinely faced:

I hate working [outside]. . . . I only do it to support myself, because I don't have a job or anything. I only do it to survive, but if I had a job, or other

ways of making money, I would not do this. You see some of the older girls, you look at yourself like, “Damn! I’ve been out here this many years already. I don’t want to be like her when I turn 40. Out here tricking.”

Michele and Mercedes suggested that working outside exposed them to public scrutiny, causing them embarrassment. Moreover, for some individuals, uncomfortable experiences stemming from outdoor sex work caused frustration at not having many other viable employment options available to them.

Safety

Besides enhancing their comfort, certain participants felt working online was safer since it enabled more thorough evaluation and screening of clients than street-based work.

Brianna’s statement summed up the perspective of these individuals. She liked indoor work better than street work because one can “negotiate and you’re havin’ a conversation over the phone. . . . Out here you never really know what you’re gonna get. [Online] you’re aware of what’s goin’ on cause you talk about how much they got, what they wanna do, and you just know up front. So, you’re lookin’ forward to it.” Brianna clarified that this negotiation made her feel safer and more in control (she knew what to expect and how the interaction was going to unfold), which engendered more predictable, pleasant encounters.

With car dates, there was very little negotiation or discussion before a client demanded service. This difference put many workers on edge and meant they were on the defensive throughout the interaction. Courtney also felt that online was safer because it inverted that dynamic whereby clients were on the defensive rather than the worker:

[Online] is safer to me because in the streets, you’re getting in a car you don’t know when you’re coming back. You don’t know if a person’s going to harm you. At least if they come into where you’re at they don’t really

know what to expect from you. When you get in their car, you don't know what to expect from them. Even when they come to your house, they're more worried. . . . So I think the chances are slimmer [that they'll harm you.]

Courtney went on to explain that when working indoors, she enlisted help from others to ensure that no intake clients acted violently while on the premises. This strategy was shared by a number of others, including, Tamyra:

I love [working online]. . . . I hate streetwalking honestly because it's tiresome. You have to worry about police, have to worry if a date tries to pull out a gun but on the inside of your house, you don't have to worry about that, because when they come to you, you pat them down and make sure they don't have a gun. . . . You have whoever is in the backroom come out and escort them out [if they do]. See, when you're in your home, you have a support network. It's not just you by yourself.

Brianna the worker who started online by doing doubles, echoed this perspective: "I think outside it's a little . . . riskier and it can be risky online too, but it's like two of us. So I feel like I have protection. There's someone else in the room, like a friend is in the bathroom. But out here, you're just by yourself. It's just you, not two." Many workers held these contrasting views of indoor and outdoor work safety: though the stroll could constitute a supportive community, there was a lack of such protection when one was alone with a client. Working inside, through online solicitation, allowed workers to involve friends or bodyguards who could act as a security in case a client became threatening.

Besides dangerous clients, workers believed working online presented less risk of encountering the police. Pamela also preferred the comfort of working online, as it meant she could control the environment: "the comfort-ability of being in my space. Having my

territory set up the way I wanted it to. I also have some comfort in knowing that [police] can't enter my home and just arrest me like that. I don't have to worry about that." This assessment was similarly echoed by Michele: "Oh my God, the police [are the worst part of working outside.] Inside, you just ask if they work with the law and they say no. The law can't lie." The last point was repeated by several sex workers and raised an interesting legal point. In-calls, in particular, meant that clients were arriving to a provider's home or dwelling. The assumption was that without a warrant an undercover officer could not enter or arrest the provider.

Refusals to Work Online

Better money, comfort, and safety caused many individuals to work online while continuing to engage in street work, yet 14 of the 43 respondents only had a past history of online work and were not currently doing so. Another 15 indicated they had never worked online. Among both groups, five reasons emerged as to why they stopped – or never started – working online: experiences with violence, greater risk of arrest from police stings, costs and competition of online work, privacy concerns, and poverty.

Violence

Research that compares outside and inside sex work has consistently found that the latter is safer for workers. Although some in our sample cited safety as one of the incentives to work online, this view was not shared by all of those who worked across both venues. Of the 43 workers who had worked online at some time, when asked which venue was safer their responses were evenly split. Joyce, a 26-year-old cis woman, explained why online spaces still presented a danger, especially when there was not another person on site for protection:

You still have . . . females getting killed, females getting robbed. You're in the room, they're choking you, [and] there's no one to help you. At least in a car you got more chances of kicking a window out, pulling car doors. . . . In the room they have you. There's nothing you can do until they leave.

Joyce's concerns about safety were premised on the understanding that outdoor spaces presented more opportunities to attract the attention of bystanders who could intervene to disrupt attacks. This assessment was shared by many other respondents as well.

For some respondents, though, the decision to move back outside was not based upon hypothetical scenarios: they stopped working online after experiencing brutal violence in their homes or indoor places of work. Pamela, a 20-year-old trans woman, acknowledged that she initially moved online because it felt safer and "more comfortable having them come to me than me going to them or me entering a strange car." Yet, she explained she took a break from sex work altogether following an indoor incident where she almost lost her life. "After that incident, I had really slowed down [on working online]. I really had no desire to do it. I haven't even made a Backpage account since." Nia, a 35-year old trans woman, also experienced a similar attack: "This man choked me. He was into [erotic] asphyxiation and he didn't tell me that and he choked me. When I got choked, I was on Backpage." Following that, Nia deactivated her accounts and moved outdoors to strolls. She preferred to work outside now because "I get to see the person and get the feel of who they are before I even go anywhere with them."

Like Nia, other workers who stopped working online mentioned the difficulty in screening or accessing clients over the Internet. Despite discussing strategies for staying safe in their own homes, very few of the providers we talked to actually used online screening capabilities. Traditionally, research on escorts or private workers has found that they rely on referrals from other sex workers before taking on new clients. None of our interviewees

discussed these as tools they used online. Two workers mentioned that they did prefer the screening capabilities of online forums and considered that when selecting where to advertise. But most discussions of safety and screening centred on the worker's own ability to assess a potential client in-person or over the phone. Shelly-Ann, a cis woman who had been working for just one and a half years, captured a sentiment expressed by a number of respondents about their preference for outdoor solicitation:

I used to [work online]. Not now. I like to interact and see a person's face. I can judge people better [in-person] than over the phone. I don't like people in my residence. I don't like to shit where I work. I feel safer working on the street than online. I can tell if you have money or if I'm going to have to pass you up. I don't like how online everyone has your number, knows your house.

Destiny, a 34-year-old trans woman who had never worked online, held similar views about the perils of indoor work:

Indoors, it's going to be walls and too many places I could not get away from. If you're inside, and your . . . client gets carried away, you're trapped in that room. They could overpower you. If we're staying outside, if that client gets carried away, you could get real loud and obnoxious. Cause a scene and people will look, versus in the room, it's just you two. [There may be] people next door to you, but the people next door to you do what? Mind their business.

There was strong consensus among our respondents that in-person assessment was more reliable than other forms of background checks and, coupled with concerns over lack of escape options indoors, contributed heavily to why workers thought street-based work was safer. The women's awareness of major media coverage surrounding murder cases and

violence against sex workers on Craigslist or online sites buttressed such fears. Regina, a trans woman who had traded sex for 15 years, simply explained: “Too many transgender[s] get killed from the Internet.”

Fear of Arrest

Workers also stopped working online because of fear of arrest. At the time of our interviews, the Metropolitan Police Department regularly conducted stings at hotels in downtown Washington, DC. These stings received considerable media attention and many workers knew about them. While some workers thought providing in-call only services might shield them from arrest, others were less sure. Particularly among those who used online sites to arrange outcall services, fear of arrest was high. Shelly-Ann explicitly mentioned that clients could see her personal information online (e.g., phone number and address), but so could undercover police. This worried her, causing her to stop using online services altogether. Joyce ceased working online for similar reasons:

Police. Your chances are higher [of getting arrested] online because you don't know who's coming to your room. Out here you can kinda get a feel. [Mimes asking another worker] “Hey do you know this person?” “Oh no, no.” “Thank you.” . . . Online, you set that up, they come to the room, you're done. I got busted going a date's room and he was an undercover. He went down to his drawers. ...He literally got down to his drawers and then they came in and locked me up.

Joyce was the only interviewee to mention screening-by-referral, a practice common among sex workers where providers will ask another worker to vouch for a client. Such referrals are helpful to identify violent or high-maintenance clients. However, Joyce noted that outside, women also used such referrals to avoid undercover officers. Without that community to lean

upon when she worked inside, Joyce explained that she was more at risk for reverse stings and these types of arrests. Almay, a 23-year-old trans woman, similarly withdrew from online work because of fears of the police: “I rather come on the streets because I feel more safe. Because if you’re in the hotel, you can get locked up.”

Costs & Competition

Although almost all interviewees agreed that there was potentially more money to be made online, there was disagreement over whether actual earnings followed suit. Workers with online experience bemoaned “timewasters,” clients who promised to set up a session only to never show up or finalize the details. According to sex workers, timewasters were relatively rare outside because when a street client pulled up, they wanted sex and the interaction moved relatively quickly. Others felt the website interfaces took a lot of time investment. These start-up costs, including setting up a website or profile, were avoided outside. Dora, the worker who preferred Eros because of their safety screening tool, also lamented just how much uncompensated time went into online work:

I don’t do online [anymore] because I just lost interest in it. I feel like I’m not gonna go through all that work to make money. . . . I mean [online work] is the same thing [as a normal job]. It’s the exact same amount of work. [Online] is just a longer way of waiting for your money. That’s it. You still gotta write your own profile, just like your resume. You still gotta write all the qualities that you have, like you gotta do for a resume. Same work! [laughs] If I’m gonna go through all that, I’m gonna create me a freaking resume and look for a damn normal job.

Many other interviewees agreed with Dora that street work was “fast money.” This characterization is perhaps the single key to the longevity of strolls and street-based markets.

Such work requires no start-up investments, either in terms of cash or time. Instead, workers appeared in the marketplace (or stroll) and could almost immediately start earning.

Comparably, online, as Dora explained, took an investment of time to set up—and there could be delayed earnings, both in terms of attracting clients and receiving payouts (if they were managed by a site). Besides the time spent setting up a new online profile, online services also charged real money for use, unlike the stroll. Paul observed: “Online, nowadays, it’s a waste of time. It ain’t harder to make money, it’s unnecessary money for unnecessary stuff on there. You gotta pay for postings of yourself and all that extra stuff and it’s unnecessary. They went up on the money on posting stuff. It’s like naw, I’m good.”

Others noted that the novelty of online work was wearing off; the marketplace had become saturated with too many providers, driving down the costs. What used to be a lucrative side hustle, then, was no longer a good return on investment. Grace reflected that the increase in online competition meant that many veteran sex workers were being priced out of the market:

I had [used the Internet] in the past but not no more. Nobody really did it back then. I would post an ad every other week for probably like a month and then come out here. I come out here because I know my money is gonna be guaranteed. Online it’s too much competition. You got a million girls on there. Some girls [are] postin’ 20 dollar special. . . . You can’t compete with that, especially if she’s nice looking. 50 dollar special. I mean [she’s] missing on the clients that want to come and spend 3, 4, 5 hundred dollars.

In this competition-rich environment, working outside was more reliable than the “slow” marketplace online. Outside, workers explained that they could drive the traffic, through their presence by finding clients rather than waiting for a client to find them. Caeleb recounted:

“The point of being on the sites is to make money off the sites rather than just being out here. But on there the money wasn’t coming fast enough. I was like OK, I’m just going to go back out to [the stroll] to get it fast.” In sum, once expanding online ceased to be profitable, many workers stopped using the platform, preferring the low costs and relative certainty of money on the stroll.

Lack of Privacy

Another major reason why workers declined to work online was due to lack of privacy. Although the stroll was a public space, many workers expressed concerns about their inability to maintain tabs on who interacted with their profile online. Shericka explained: “I’ve never did the Internet. I don’t trust the Internet. I’m not the type of girl that wants to expose myself to any of that.” Some worried this may have an impact on their reputation and future. Diamond, a trans woman who engages in part-time sex work, stated she did not work online because if her profile was viewed by a work colleague, that could impact her plans for career advancement:

I’m in the corporate world. I run two major companies [and] I’m in a major school. . . . If you see me down here [on the stroll] and you come to me about it and my question going to be, “What were you doing here?” That’s how we end this. I can’t explain to you what I’m doing on [online platforms] but I can explain to you if you catch me down here because I caught you down here [too].

For Diamond, working the stroll gave her control. She was able to observe clients and passers-by. This ability to watch who was in her physical space gave Diamond the benefit of

mutual reputation destruction; she might be doing sex work, but a client was also on the stroll. Online, Diamond was unable to exert the same control over her space; she was unaware of who was looking at her profile or ads. Many sites operate by allowing users to select usernames and, with free sites, users are often not required to complete a profile before browsing ads. Without that benefit of mutual reputation destruction, Diamond worried that a client could identify her and potentially tarnish her reputation. Therefore, she preferred the stroll where she could exercise more control and awareness if a colleague saw her.

Other workers also struggled with this aspect of privacy. Dora, for example, initially suggested that she enjoyed such interactions with old acquaintances, but as we continued talking she expressed more uncertainty, concluding maybe this loss of privacy online was not as great as she initially thought:

[The best thing about working online is] meeting all the people I would never expect. They may go “Hey! You remember me? No? We went to school together.” “What?! School?! For real?” [But] I felt kinda weird and awkward that they had this interest in me only seeing me online. That it took them seeing me sell my body for [them] to approach me.

Especially for trans women, online interactions intensified the feeling of being othered and fetishized. Rather than being approached by these classmates in real life and treated as a desirable person, Dora had to navigate them approaching her online, using different photos to disguise their identity, and then act as though she was excited by their (re)appearance in her life. The interaction was “awkward” and uncomfortable because they had failed to express their attraction to her until they saw her on an online forum that explicitly listed her as a sex worker.

Poverty

Finally, the relationship between poverty, housing instability, and street-level sex work has been well established. This relationship also interfered with the ability to work online. For example, Serena, who had never worked online, stated that “my phone is never paid on time, so it’s hard to be consistent” in posting or generating content. For those who had previously worked online and considered it a safer option, poverty and homelessness were the primary factors that led them to cease using such platforms. Elaine, who had drawn all of her clients from online in the past, stopped working indoors when she moved at the end of her lease. She moved in with a friend and out of respect for that friend’s privacy had returned to street-based work rather than continue with online/in-call work. Currently, none of her clients came from online platforms; a total loss of that market expansion.

Similarly, Pamela mentioned housing when asked why she stopped working online: “I guess the problem now is just housing. Over the years, I have fell in and out of homelessness [because] sex work not being enough.” She was currently couch-surfing with friends, and no longer worked online despite drawing 90% of her clients through such platforms in the past. Simone shared a similar story about why she quite advertising online: “I used to [find dates online] but I don’t do it now because I don’t have my own place to stay. When I had my own place to stay or I stayed with my best friend, and we had our own rooms, I did the Internet thing.” When asked which venue she felt was safer, Simone enthusiastically endorsed working inside: “Yes. *Way* safer. Like I haven’t had no bad experience with the Internet.”

CONCLUSION

Far from “rarely employing” Internet-based markets, three-quarters of the sex workers we spoke to used it as an “additional space” that allowed them to build and expand their

business model. Yet it did not replace their continued work on the street. Rather than one-directional, the mobility between outdoor and indoor sex work was quite fluid, suggesting both worker and customer overlap across spaces. Our sample of sex workers claimed that digital platforms allowed them to reach large audiences, build up multifaceted reputations, and expand into better paying types of work. However, while a large proportion of outdoor sex workers we interviewed also worked online, it is likely that the reverse is not true.

Sanders and her colleagues found that only 8% of online sex workers in a UK study worked outside previously and only 2% indicated they were doing so at the time of the survey.²⁸

Thus, the strength of movement from streetside to inside may still strongly push in one direction, and many of our interviewees reaffirmed their desire to move inside long term.

At the same time, a number of our respondents also expressed concern about online sex work. They explained that the digital platforms, while a valuable tool, were not as reliable as in-person marketplaces. Many noted that such concerns over housing, safety, criminalization, and reliability brought them back to the streets, suggesting that the pathway from street to indoor sex work is not one direction but subject to individual and environmental factors. Workers were especially divided on whether indoor, online-mediated sex work was safer than outdoor work, with several mentioning they had moved back to full-time outdoor work following especially violent attacks against them indoors. Only two workers mentioned screening protocols (and one was in the context of street-based work), suggesting that there is an opportunity for harm-reduction services and sex worker activists to do more training and outreach about low-cost or free screening services that exist online. Surprisingly, workers were more concerned about the risk of arrest when doing indoor work than outdoor work. This finding could be partially due to the location; Metropolitan police in Washington, DC have largely adopted a “move along” style of policing street-based sex work. Rather than arrest sex workers during an initial contact, workers are asked to leave the

area. Interviews with MPD officers doing the same period confirmed that; one officer we interviewed summarized the department's approach: "If [sex workers] are out there we can't really arrest them for that. ... If they're being a nuisance and we get calls then we're like 'you got to carry this on elsewhere.'²⁹" Therefore, street-based arrests are largely based on organised reverse stings which have become less of a priority for the department.³⁰

Finally, our findings also pose serious and critical questions for how sex workers are recruited and labelled by venue type. Street-based workers are rarely asked about their work across various venues, or, if they are, the assumption is that they are *street-based*, and that the majority of their clients come from streetside solicitation. Our findings here suggest quite the opposite; that many were *street-casual*, working along the stroll as one part of a broader market portfolio. This is especially pertinent for research that has used market-type as an axis for comparison (e.g., comparing indoor vs. street workers). These findings indicate that researchers may need to re-examine their findings in light of potentially confounding variables. If street-based sex workers are using digital platforms and working inside, at least partially, there are likely additional factors (e.g., poverty, housing insecurity, transphobia) that contribute to differences in victimization, health inequity, and criminalization than work sector context.

There are notable limitations in our study. First, the sample is small and therefore the findings are not generalizable to other street sex workers in other places and time periods. Yet, the strength of this qualitative analysis is its illumination of practices, motives, perceptions, and decision-making regarding those street workers who also use digital platforms. Second, our research focused on two types of strolls: identity-associated and high-track. Workers who solicit along drug-associated strolls face additional pressures and obstacles, including substance dependence, which may further limit their ability to use online marketplaces (or even want to). Finally, our research was conducted before the 2018 passage

of the twin federal Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA) and Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) laws and the concurrent shutdown of Backpage.³¹ SESTA/FOSTA had an “immediate and chilling effect” on digital sex work.³² Many of the digital advertising platforms mentioned by interviewees no longer exist or are more restricted and difficult to access. As a result, we expect that the proportion of street-based workers in Washington, DC, who are also operating online may have decreased since we conducted our research.

TABLE 11.1: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

| | N | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| <i>Gender (n=59)</i> | | |
| Trans female | 47 | 79.7 |
| Cis female | 7 | 11.9 |
| Cis male | 5 | 8.5 |
| <i>Race (n=59)</i> | | |
| Black/African-American | 53 | 89.8 |
| Bi- or multiracial | 5 | 8.5 |
| White | 1 | 1.7 |
| <i>Age (n=58)</i> | | |
| Under-25 | 22 | 37.9 |
| 25-34 | 29 | 50.0 |
| 35+ | 7 | 12.1 |
| <i>Length of time in sex work (n=57)</i> | | |
| Less than 2 years | 5 | 8.8 |
| 2-5 years | 23 | 40.4 |
| 6-9 years | 9 | 15.8 |
| 10-14 years | 9 | 15.8 |
| 15+ years | 11 | 19.3 |
| <i>Entered sex work as a minor (%Yes) (n=56)</i> | 21 | 37.5 |
| <i>Education (n=52)</i> | | |
| Less than high school diploma | 13 | 25.0 |
| High school diploma or GED | 28 | 53.9 |
| More than high school | 11 | 21.2 |
| <i>Housing at time of interview (n=36)</i> | | |
| Homeless, couchsurfing, or living in a shelter | 9 | 25.0 |
| Living with family | 10 | 38.9 |
| Renting | 14 | 38.9 |
| Other arrangement | 3 | 8.3 |
| <i>Is sex work your only form of income? (%Yes, n=59)</i> | 39 | 66.1 |

Table 11.2: THE INTERNET AS A RECRUITMENT TOOL

| | N | % |
|---|----|------|
| <i>Do you use the Internet to recruit clients? (n=58)</i> | | |
| Yes, currently | 29 | 50.0 |
| Yes, in the past | 14 | 24.1 |
| No, never | 15 | 25.9 |
| <i>If yes, what proportion of your clients are from the Internet (n=29)</i> | | |
| Less than 25% | 4 | 13.8 |
| 25-49% | 4 | 13.8 |
| 50-74% | 9 | 31.0 |
| 75%+ | 12 | 41.4 |

NOTES

¹ Scott Cunningham and Todd Kendall, “Prostitution 2.0: The Changing Face of Sex Work,” *Journal of Urban Economics* 69 (2011): 273–287; Keith Sharp and Sarah Earle, “Cyberpunters and Cyberwhores: Prostitution on the Internet,” in Y. Jewkes, ed. *Dot.cons: Crime, Deviance, and Identity on the Internet*, Cullompton, UK: Willan, 2003.

² Angela Jones, “Sex Work in a Digital Era,” *Sociology Compass* 9 (2015): 558–570.

³ Jones, “Sex Work in a Digital Era.”

⁴ Jennifer Lee-Gonyea, Tammy Castle, and Nathan Gonyea, “Laid to Order: Male Escorts Advertising on the Internet,” *Deviant Behavior* 30 (2009): 321–348.

⁵ Cunningham and Kendall, “Prostitution 2.0.”

⁶ Stephanie Church, Marion Henderson, Marina Barnard, and Graham Hart, “Violence By Clients Towards Female Prostitutes In Different Work Settings: Questionnaire Survey,” *BMJ* 322 (2001): 524–525; Kathleen Deering et al., “A Systematic Review of the Correlates of Violence Against Sex Workers,” *American Journal of Public Health* 104 (2014): E42-54; John Lowman, “Violence and the Outlaw Status of (Street) Prostitution in Canada” *Violence Against Women* 6 (2000): 987–1011; John Potterat et al., “Mortality in a Long-Term Open Cohort of Prostitute Women,” *American Journal Epidemiology* 159 (2004): 778–785; M. Socias et al., “Social and Structural Factors Shaping High Rates of Incarceration among Sex Workers in a Canadian Setting,” *Journal of Urban Health* 92 (2015): 966–979; Eva Klambauer, “Policing Roulette: Sex Workers’ Perception of Encounters with Police Officers in the Indoor and Outdoor Sector in England,” *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 18 (2018): 255–272; Penelope Saunders and Jennifer Kirby, “Move Along: Community-based Research into the Policing of Sex Work in Washington, D.C.,” *Social Justice* 37 (2010): 107–127; Katie Hail-Jares, Catherine Paquette, and Margot LeNeveu, “Meeting the New Neighbors: A Case Study on Gentrification and Sex Work in Washington, D.C.,” in K. Hail-Jares, C. Shdaimah, and C. Leon, eds., *Challenging Perspectives on Street-Based Sex Work*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017; Teela Sanders, “The Risks of Street Prostitution: Punters, Police, and Protesters,” *Urban Studies* 41 (2004): 1703–1717.

⁷ Janet Lever and Deanne Dolnick, “Call Girls and Street Prostitutes: Selling Sex and Intimacy,” in R. Weitzer, ed., *Sex for Sale*, New York: Routledge, 2010.

⁸ Leslie Ann Jeffrey and Gayle Macdonald, “‘It’s the Money, Honey’: The Economy of Sex Work in the Maritimes,” *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 43 (2006): 313–327; Judith Porter and Louis Bonilla, “The Ecology of Street Prostitution,” in R. Weitzer, ed., *Sex for Sale*, New York: Routledge, 2010; Elijah Edelman et al., *Access Denied: Washington, DC Trans Needs Assessment Report*, DC Trans Coalition, 2015; Erin Fitzgerald, et al., *Meaningful Work: Transgender Experiences in the Sex Trade*, Bestpracticespolicy.org, 2015.

⁹ Sex surfing is using dating apps to find temporary housing. A person uses apps to find a place to stay then offers sex in exchange. The term is a portmanteau of “couch surfing” and “sex work.”

¹⁰ Angela Jones, *Camming: Money, Power, and Pleasure in the Sex Work Industry*, New York: NYU Press, 2020; Moore, *Couch Surfing Limbo*; Stewart Cunningham, et al., “Behind the Screen: Commercial Sex, Digital Spaces and Working Online,” *Technology in Society* 53 (2018): 47–54; Teela Sanders et al., *Internet Sex Work: Beyond the Gaze*, London: Springer International Publishing, 2018; Kevin Walby, *Touching Encounters: Sex, Work, and Male-for-Male Internet Escorting*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

¹¹ Jones, *Camming*.

¹² Jody Raphael and Deborah Shapiro, “Violence in Indoor and Outdoor Prostitution Venues,” *Violence Against Women* 10 (2004): 126–139.

¹³ Kathleen Preble, Karen Magruder, and Andrea Cimino, “‘It’s like Being an Electrician, You’re Gonna Get Shocked’: Differences in the Perceived Risks of Indoor and Outdoor Sex Work and Its Impact on Exiting,” *Victims & Offenders* 14 (2019): 625–646.

¹⁴ Elena Argento et al., “The Loss of Boystown and Transition to Online Sex Work: Strategies and Barriers to Increase Safety Among Men Sex Workers and Clients of Men,” *American Journal of Men’s Health* 12 (2018): 1994–2005.

¹⁵ While our research here goes on to be critical of this terminology (e.g. “street-based”), we acknowledge that this has traditionally be how sex workers who primarily solicit outside are best known. We use this terminology within this chapter, but hope future scholars can begin to shift the conversation towards a more inclusive vocabulary that acknowledges the range of marketplaces used by sex workers.

¹⁶ A general description of the strolls is provided, but geographic or location-based information is not. This follows best practices recommended by the International Network of Sex Worker Projects.

¹⁷ Records from the Washington organization HIPS.

¹⁸ This vein of research often does specify the types of strolls within the research location or which ones were used for recruitment and assumes broad overlap between street-based sex work and addiction. See for example, Porter and Bonilla, “The Ecology of Street Prostitution”; Steven Kurtz, Hilary Surratt, James Inciardi, and Marion Kiley, “Sex Work and ‘Date’ Violence,” *Violence Against Women* 10 (2004): 357-385.

¹⁹ Katie Hail-Jares, “Bad Dates: How Prostitution Strolls Impact Client-Initiated Violence,” *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society* 71 (2016): 115–137; Sharon Oselin, Katie Hail-Jares, and Melanie Kushida, “Different Strolls, Different Worlds? Gentrification and its Impact on Outdoor Sex Work,” *Social Problems* (2020) DOI:10.1093/socpro/spaa056; Sharon Oselin and Katie Hail-Jares, “It’s Not Just Sex: Relational Dynamics between Street-Based Sex Workers and Their Regular Customers,” *Work, Employment, and Society* (2021) DOI:10.1177/09500170211021723.

²⁰ Lowman provides this full explanation of the different “tracks” he encountered in his research of street-based sex work in Vancouver: “These terms [high-, mid-, and low-

track]...distinguish different levels of strolls according to the prices charged for sexual services. The highest prices are high track. Low track is a pejorative term used to designate the [Downtown Eastside] – an area that we refer to as a drug-associated stroll. John Lowman, Testimony to *The Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*, Vancouver, 2011, p. 12, footnote 13.

²¹ Lowman, Testimony.

²² Sunday and Monday nights were typically their busiest nights, suggesting that missing the main weekend nights (Fridays and Saturdays) did not greatly skew the number of sex workers present for recruitment purposes.

²³ Porter and Bonilla, “The Ecology of Street Prostitution”; Lever and Dolnick, “Call Girls and Street Prostitutes”; Nabila El-Bassel et al., “Correlates of Partner Violence Among Female Street-Based Sex Workers: Substance Abuse, History of Childhood Abuse, and HIV Risks,” *AIDS Patient Care STDs* 15 (2001): 41–51.

²⁴ John Campbell, Charles Quincy, Jordan Osserman, and Ove Pedersen, “Coding In-depth Semistructured Interviews: Problems of Unitization and Intercoder Reliability and Agreement,” *Sociological Methods & Research* 42 (2013): 294-320.

²⁵ Statistical tests – Fisher’s exact test and two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) – revealed there were not significant demographic differences between the two waves.

²⁶ Meghan McNally, *Washington: Number One in College Degrees*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2003.

²⁷ Fisher’s Exact Test suggest there was no statistically significant difference in the proportion that used online solicitation between the two waves.

²⁸ Sanders et al., “Characteristics and Working Practices of Online Sex Workers.”

²⁹ Though not included in this chapter, our project consisted of triangulating data on gentrification from three different sources: sex workers, residents who were living along strolls, and police officers.

³⁰ Saunders and Kirby, “Move Along”; Hail-Jares et al., “Meeting the New Neighbors.”

³¹ The laws made hosting services, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit, financially liable for sexually explicit content, particularly content that could broadly be construed as condoning or allowing sexual trafficking. To avoid such liability, many websites preemptively changed their terms of services before the laws passed, and banned sexually explicit content from their sites. This led to the erasure of many sex worker resources, including “bad date” or client-screening tools, support networks, and advertising. SESTA/FOSTA is a distinct event from the U.S. Department of Justice’s seizure of Backpage, a popular advertising site, in April 2018. The owners of Backpage were charged with facilitating prostitution under the U.S. Travel Act, not under SESTA/FOSTA.

³² Danielle Blunt and Ariel Wolf, “Erased: The Impact of FOSTA/SESTA and the Removal of Backpage on Sex Workers,” *Anti-Trafficking Review* 14 (2020): 117–121.